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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

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AM

SUBJECT: ARMENIA'S 2008 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

REF: STATE 00002731

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(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

11. (U) This cable represents Embassy Yerevan's submission for the 2008 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. Please see paragraph 5 for responses keyed to reftel request.

12. (SBU) During the reporting period, the government of Armenia significantly revamped its interagency apparatus that is responsible for combating TIP. Positive developments included the final adoption of the 2007-09 National Plan of Action (NPA), the creation of a ministerial level council headed by the Deputy Prime Minister to combat trafficking, the development of the draft National Referral Mechanism, and the first ever -- to post's knowledge -- line-item allocation of GOAM funding (USD 33,000) for domestic anti-TIP programs. The new NPA is unique in that most of the activities described therein are supposed to be financed by the state budget, a stark contrast to first NPA where the international community financed virtually all anti-trafficking initiatives.

13. (SBU) Despite this overhaul, however, which now assigns anti-TIP responsibilities to the ministerial level, room for improvement remains, particularly in implementing anti-TIP programs. In addition, prosecution of official complicity from previous trafficking cases remains a weak area, and the government could better leverage the expertise of NGOs in the TIP field to bolster its own efforts.

14. (SBU) Combating TIP in Armenia remains a top mission priority. Embassy officials met frequently with senior members of the Armenian government, with concrete results. The USG funded a victims' assistance program that provided safe-haven and medical, social and legal services, facilitated the assistance to 14 trafficking victims, and funded a victim hotline. INL funded a number of training programs for Armenian law enforcement agencies. Officials advocated persistently for the revamped government structure that raises the responsibility for combating TIP to the ministerial level, and advised the government on TIP funding priorities, which finally appear to be taking place.

15. (SBU) Post would like to inform G/TIP that information provided in this report covers only calendar year 2007. Information through March 2008 is currently unavailable, due to the ongoing political crisis and declared State of Emergency in Armenia which has hampered

law enforcement agencies' ability to provide requested information. Post will promptly transmit such data should it become available before the end of March.

OVERVIEW

16. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section A of reftel paragraph 27.

-- Is the country a country of origin, transit, or destination for internationally trafficked men, women, or children?

Armenia is a source and, to a lesser extent, a transit and destination country for women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation largely to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey. It is also a source country for Armenian men and women trafficked to Russia and Turkey for labor.

-- Provide, where possible, numbers or estimates for each group; how they were trafficked, to where, and for what purpose.

According to data on pimping and trafficking cases from Armenia's Prosecutor General's (PG's) Office, 147 people were subjected to sexual or labor exploitation during calendar year 2007. Of these 147 victims - all of whom were women, two were subjected to labor exploitation in Turkey.

Of the 147, 36 were classified as trafficking victims under the Armenian criminal code. Most of the women were trafficked from Armenia either to Turkey or Dubai for sexual exploitation, and two were victims of labor trafficking in Turkey.

It remains a challenge to disentangle Armenian criminal justice data on pimping and trafficking in persons, and to translate that into

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our own definitional categories. Of the 147 women and girls deemed by the Government of Armenia to be trafficking victims or to have been illegally recruited into voluntary prostitution, 36 women identified in connection with Armenian TIP prosecutions clearly meet the U.S. definition of trafficking victims. An additional 33 women or girls also most probably meet the U.S. definition of trafficking victims, for a total of 69 trafficking victims (32 to the UAE, 34 to Turkey, and three Russian women exploited in Armenia). The remaining 78 victims appear not to meet the U.S. definition of trafficking victims.

There are no accurate figures clearly documenting the scale of Armenian trafficking victims in any of the destination countries. Due to poor social conditions and severe poverty in Armenia, especially outside the capital city of Yerevan, many men and women seek employment abroad where they can fall victim to sex or labor trafficking. According to unconfirmed reports, hundreds of Armenian women engage in prostitution in the UAE and Turkey, and it is impossible to confirm with certainty what percentage is bona fide trafficking victims. Tens of thousands of Armenian men travel to Russia for seasonal construction work, but no data exist to quantify the numbers (presumably a small but significant minority) who are exploited as trafficking victims.

In November 2007, the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) published a 2005-07 survey on Labor Migration from Armenia. The survey revealed that out of the 1500 households interviewed, 14.5 percent of them had family members who were engaged in labor migration. 93.5 percent of those involved in labor migration were males; 93 percent of the labor migrants worked in or were bound for Russia; and 77.3 worked in the construction industry. Although approximately 70.4 percent of the migrants had informal job arrangements prior to travel, the vast majority did not have any legal agreement/contract with their employers. According to the survey, the data clearly shows that labor exploitation and violation of labor regulations are widespread in the destination countries for Armenians, although migrants as a rule did not complain about it. The survey recorded cases when the migrants went either unpaid or

underpaid for the job; were subjected to unacceptably harsh working and living conditions, or were faced with dangers to their personal security or life; when candidates for migration were enticed into employment under false pretences; when they suffered deductions from wages with or without their voluntary consent; and when they worked overtime and without rest.

In June 2007, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), with input from two local NGOs (Hope and Help, and Democracy Today), published a booklet on "Victims of Trafficking Assisted in Armenia" that covered the period of October 2003 through March 2007. In the mentioned period, the two NGOs assisted a total of 87 trafficking victims. Although the booklet does not provide information relevant to the current reporting period, the detailed information provides insights into the overall TIP landscape:

Out of the 87 victims assisted during the mentioned period:

- 37 were referred to the NGOs by law enforcement agencies, two by Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), five by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 26 by the NGO's social workers themselves, and 17 were located through the telephone hotlines run by the NGOs;

- 41 percent were trafficked to the UAE, 30 percent to Turkey, 14 percent to Russia and in 15 percent of cases Armenia was the destination country;

- 80 percent of the victims were subjected to sexual trafficking and 20 to labor trafficking;

- 10 were male and the rest female;

- 69 percent of the victims were aged 18-30 years;

- and in 61 percent of the trafficking cases, the recruiters of the victims were their friends;

During the April-December 2007 timeframe, the Hope and Help NGO assisted two women who were victims of forced marriages and labor exploitation simultaneously. In both cases the women were victimized in Turkey, one of whom was 63 years old, the other 25.

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Trafficking victims are usually recruited by friends (ostensibly), friends of friends, acquaintances or neighbors. Those trafficked to the UAE usually fly to Dubai directly from Yerevan, or sometimes via Moscow. In most cases, the victims use their real documents to travel to Moscow, where traffickers generally give them false documents for the final leg to the UAE to evade UAE immigration restrictions. There have been cases in which UAE law enforcement agencies had deported victims back to Moscow, at which time traffickers forged new false documents for them and returned the victims directly back to Dubai. The trafficking route to Turkey is generally via bus through Georgia. Here as well, frequently traffickers recapture victims deported to Georgia, and send them back to Turkey with new false documents.

The December 2007 "Anti-trafficking Needs Assessment of Armenian Law Enforcement" written by international experts involved in the UNDP's Anti-Trafficking Project and a joint project operated by the OSCE, International Labor Organization (ILO), and the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) contains reports from Armenian law enforcement agencies which indicate that the trafficking destination for Armenian victims is shifting away from the UAE toward other states in the Persian Gulf, namely Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. Such reports have surfaced in the past, but no specific cases have yet to be registered.

According to the needs assessment, in the case of trafficking of men for labor exploitation, the traffickers appear to be known locally. The men are recruited and transported in organized groups (up to 40 persons) and work in Russia for periods of up to two years in the construction industry. Their freedom of movement is limited, passports confiscated, conditions of work poor, they receive only a

small percentage of the wages owed, and many are threatened with retribution against loved ones back home if they reveal their labor conditions. To reiterate, the information from the needs assessment provides a more general understanding of the trafficking situation, but no such cases have been registered in the period covered by this report. The lack of reported cases is likely due to the unwillingness of trafficking victims to admit to the perceived stigma of having been trafficked.

-- Does the trafficking occur within the country's borders?

We have had no indications of internal trafficking within Armenia. Armenia is geographically small, approximately the size of the state of Rhode Island, which limits the scope for internal trafficking.

-- Does it occur in territory outside of the government's control (e.g. in a civil war situation)?

Not applicable.

-- Are any estimates or reliable numbers available as to the extent or magnitude of the problem?

No. Post suspects the number of criminal cases and victims reported by law enforcement do not represent the majority of cases. Victims are still reluctant to report crimes, and there is still a pervasive though slowly diminishing attitude among law enforcement officials that prostitutes who are lured abroad with the promise of better wages for plying the same trade are not "true" victims of trafficking.

-- What is (are) the source(s) of available information on trafficking in persons or what plans are in place (if any) to undertake documentation of trafficking? How reliable are the numbers and these sources?

The best available statistics on criminal cases have traditionally been furnished by Armenia's Prosecutor General's Office. As of December 1, 2007, however, the Anti-Trafficking Unit under the PG's office was disbanded -- part of a comprehensive restructuring -- and with it post's primary source of trafficking data. (Note: The disbanding of the unit was the result of changes in Armenian legislation that transferred all investigative functions from the PG's office to other law enforcement agencies. Philosophically, the broader reorganization is a healthy change, aimed at providing more Western-style institutional checks and balances into the investigative process. It remains to be seen whether this change will enhance or detract from law enforcement agencies' capabilities to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. End note.)

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Now the main law enforcement body dealing with trafficking in persons, which also has jurisdiction for trafficking in illicit narcotics, is the specialized Anti-Trafficking Unit that falls organizationally under the Police Department for Combating Organized Crime that was established in 2003. According to the GOAM, the authorities will continue distributing trafficking data in the near future, however it remains to be seen how exactly this will be done.

In the meantime, the chair of the Anti-TIP Working Group from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been informally collecting and providing this information to post.

The main sources of information on specific trafficking cases usually comprise news articles by the Association of Investigative Journalists; information from the two organizations that work with trafficking victims (the Hope and Help NGO and the United Methodist Committee on Relief, or UMCOR); and materials from criminal cases and court verdicts. (Note: Due to diminishing funding, the Association of Investigative Journalists may soon no longer be able to continue its reporting. End note.)

-- Are certain groups of persons more at risk of being trafficked (e.g. women and children, boys versus girls, certain ethnic groups, refugees, etc.)?

The groups most vulnerable to sex trafficking include prostitutes, young women who have recently "aged out" of orphanages and special schools, the unemployed, homeless people, refugees, single mothers and divorced women. Labor traffickers take advantage of unemployed or seasonal workers from poverty-stricken communities. Trafficking victims overwhelmingly come from impoverished communities; the common factor among the vulnerable groups is poverty and a lack of socio-economic opportunities.

17. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section B of reftel paragraph 27.

-- Please provide a general overview of the trafficking situation in the country and any changes since the last TIP Report (e.g. changes in direction). Also briefly explain the political will to address trafficking in persons.

Since the 2007 TIP report, there has been a significant restructuring of responsibilities of government agencies tasked with combating trafficking, most important of which was the elevation of the inter-agency anti-TIP commission to a ministerial council chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, whose decisions will henceforth possess a binding instead of advisory nature. In broader terms, however, TIP issues, like many others, generally receded from the public spotlight during this reporting period, due largely to the fact that Armenia held two national elections, parliamentary elections in May 2007, and a hotly disputed presidential election in February 2008 which has triggered an unresolved political crisis in the country.

Some significant, positive developments during the reporting period include:

A) On December 6, 2007 the GOAM approved its second National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking for 2007-2009.

B) On the same date the GOAM created a new ministerial level Council on Trafficking In Persons chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed of cabinet-level ministers, thereby creating for the first time in Armenia an anti-TIP institution with the power to make binding decisions.

C) The GOAM made a significant breakthrough on developing a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for trafficking victims. The draft NRM was completed for pilot testing by the end of the reporting period.

D) The GOAM hosted a large international conference on trafficking in September 2007 that generated significant media coverage of trafficking issues.

E) The PG's office has obligated approximately USD 33,000 in FY08 funds for a.) the filming of a documentary on labor trafficking that will be aired on Armenian regional networks as well as on national public television; b.) the production of two public service announcements which promote trafficking awareness and prevention; and c.) an organizational map for law enforcement agencies that will document trafficking trends and incidence in Armenia.

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-- What kind of conditions are the victims trafficked into?

According to NGO accounts, victims in Turkey and the UAE are deprived of their documents, cannot leave the places where they are kept, do not have control or cannot make decisions over their agencies, are beaten and raped, punished (physical abuse) for disobedience, and assessed with constantly growing debts that must be repaid to traffickers. Victims are afraid to go to police because of their illegal status.

-- Which populations are targeted by the traffickers?

See the last section of paragraph 5 above.

-- Who are the traffickers?

The traffickers are pimps, usually Armenian citizens, in the UAE and Turkey, each of whom has established networks of recruiters and other facilitators that help them with various logistics (e.g. preparing false documents, transportation, etc.). Those pimps, mainly women, who in some cases had formerly worked as prostitutes in the destination countries, and who sometimes have one or multiple convictions for the same crime) have very good connections with the local populations in the destination and transit countries. In numerous cases the same recruiters work for various pimps, as do the people in Moscow who forge the documents.

Armenia law enforcement agencies say the trafficking operations are loosely associated groups, and not organized criminal structures, a characterization that international experts have challenged. In their December 2007 anti-trafficking needs assessment, experts from UNDP and ILO-OSCE-ICMPD said trafficking operations bore the sign of organized criminal structures, irregardless of the scale of the crime and the number of identified victims. Proof of this lay in the capacity of traffickers to provide forged documents, transport, and to conduct both the receipt and placement of victims. This opinion is shared by many local and international experts.

-- What methods are used to approach victims? (Are they offered lucrative jobs, sold by their families, approached by friends of friends, etc.?)

The victims are usually approached by "friends of friends," neighbors or acquaintances, but seldom on the street. The recruiters usually lure victims with promises of high wages, either to engage in prostitution, or, less frequently, for work as nannies, care-providers and waitresses. Though most trafficking victims know they are going to work as prostitutes, they are not fully aware of the exploitative conditions in which they will work. The victims in the labor trafficking case were promised a reasonable wage, which they never received.

-- What methods are used to move the victims (e.g., are false documents being used?).

See paragraph 5 above.

-- Are employment, travel, and tourism agencies or marriage brokers involved with or fronting for traffickers or crime groups to traffic individuals?

There have been no reports that indicate this.

18. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section C of reftel paragraph 27.

-- Which government agencies are involved in anti-trafficking efforts and which agency, if any, has the lead?

On December 6, the GOAM by decree of the Prime Minister created a new structure on combating trafficking. The new structure is a ministerial level council (the highest interagency level entity possible within the Armenian system of government) chaired by the Minister of Territorial Administration (the current incumbent Minister also serves as the Deputy Prime Minister). The high-level council was created to replace the previously existing governmental interagency working group, which lacked the political weight to make and implement binding government policy. The decisions of the new council will be binding. In addition to the Deputy PM, the council is comprised of the following officials: Minister of Sports and

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Youth Affairs, Minister of Justice, Minister of Trade and Economic Development, Minister of Finance and Economy, Minister of Education and Science, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Minister of Health, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prosecutor General, Head of National Security Council, Head of Police, Head of International Relations Department of the Staff of the President, Head of the Migration Agency under the Ministry of Territorial Administration (secretary of the council). The council has a broad mandate of implementing, coordinating and monitoring the government's anti-trafficking efforts. According to the council's mandate it

should hold meetings not less than every three months. The chair and secretary of the inter-agency working group have an advisory status at the council; international and local NGOs as well as diplomatic organizations can be present at the meetings of the council as observers. The council has not held any meetings since its establishment, as its chairman was the director of the Prime Minister's campaign during the presidential race in January and February, 2008.

The previously existing inter-agency working group has been reorganized to serve as a supporting working group that will "organize the ongoing activities of the council." The working group includes representatives from all of Armenia's law enforcement agencies (Police, National Security Service (NSS), PG's Office); the Migration Agency under the Ministry of Territorial Administration; the Government; the Parliament; Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Justice; Health; Labor and Social Affairs; Ministry of Trade and Economic Development; Education and Science; Sports and Youth affairs; Finance and Economy; and the National Statistical Service. According to the GOAM, the statistical service will help them track trafficking-related data. The MFA has the lead in this working group and is the main point of contact for foreign and local actors.

More specifically, the Head of the International Organizations Department chairs the group, and the Head of the Human Rights desk is the secretary. Among other things, the working group is mandated to hold meetings monthly, ensure that the GOAM fulfills its anti-TIP commitments under international agreements, develop joint programs with the international community, carry out public awareness campaigns, etc. The working group has to present an annual report on its activities to the Anti-TIP Council by January 15 of each year.

¶9. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section D of reftel paragraph 27.

-- What are the limitations on the government's ability to address this problem in practice? For example, is funding for police or other institutions inadequate? Is overall corruption a problem? Does the government lack the resources to aid victims?

A lack of financial and human resources hamper the government's ability to address trafficking in persons, which is likewise hindered by official corruption.

The Police, the PG's Office, and the National Security Service (NSS) informed post that one of Armenia's main obstacles to investigating trafficking is the lack of regional cooperation. This is even more difficult given that the main destination countries are the UAE, which is plagued by TIP problems and thus hyper sensitive to the issue, and Turkey, with whom Armenia has no diplomatic relations.

¶10. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section E of reftel paragraph 27.

-- To what extent does the government systematically monitor its anti-trafficking efforts (on all fronts -- prosecution, prevention and victim protection) and periodically make available, publicly or privately and directly or through regional/international organizations, its assessments of these anti-trafficking efforts?

The government's interagency working group is the main monitoring body. The working group has a reporting mechanism under which every commission member, as well as local and international organizations, present summaries of their activities for a specific period. In practice, parties did not report regularly.

Post's demands for data generally prompted government reporting, with the exception of that produced by the PG's Office. The PG's Office kept very good track of cases and published statistics through the mass media quarterly (see information on changes in the PG's office in Paragraph 5 above). The interagency working group published a report on the first National Plan of Action (NPA). The

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new 2007-09 NPA envisages the possibility of creating a monitoring system. The interagency working group is now mandated by law to present annual reports on its activities by mid-January each year

(see above).

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

¶11. (SBU) This section corresponds to the questions in section A of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Does the country have a law specifically prohibiting trafficking in persons -- both for sexual and non-sexual purposes (e.g. forced labor)? If so, please specifically cite the name of the law and its date of enactment. Does the law(s) cover both internal and external (transnational) forms of trafficking? If not, under what other laws can traffickers be prosecuted? For example, are there laws against slavery or the exploitation of prostitution by means of force, fraud or coercion? Are these other laws being used in trafficking cases? Please provide a full inventory of trafficking laws, including non-criminal statutes that allow for civil penalties against alleged trafficking crimes, (e.g., civil forfeiture laws and laws against illegal debt.

Articles 132 and 132-1 of Armenia's Criminal Code cover all aspects of human trafficking. Amendments to the trafficking statutes enacted in July 2006 significantly clarified and toughened the penalties. The Code's two pimping statutes (261 and 262) provide for prosecution and punishment of those found guilty of organization of prostitution and recruitment of prostitutes.

Victims of trafficking may obtain restitution during a criminal case, or in a civil case, after the completion of the criminal case. In the latter case, the judge may rule that the victim is entitled to seek civil damages. The Labor Code includes articles prohibiting forced labor, abuse of workers, and employment of children.

¶12. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section B of reftel paragraph 28.

-- What are the prescribed penalties for trafficking people for sexual exploitation?

Under the Criminal Code the applicable prison term is three-15 years, depending on the aggravating circumstances. These sentences are commensurate with those for rape. The penalties, which were stiffened in July 2006, have also had the effect of elevating trafficking crimes into the category of "grave" and "especially grave" crimes. According to the Armenian Criminal Code, those convicted of "grave" and "especially grave" crimes must serve at least half of their sentences before parole or release. Previously, those convicted of trafficking crimes were eligible for release after serving only one-third of their sentences.

-- What penalties were imposed for persons convicted of sexual exploitation over the reporting period?

Please see answers provided in paragraph 16 below.

-- Please note the number of convicted sex traffickers who received suspended sentences and the number who received only a fine as punishment.

Please see answers provided in paragraph 16 below.

¶13. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section C of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Punishment of Labor Trafficking Offenses: What are the prescribed and imposed penalties for trafficking for labor exploitation, such as forced or bonded labor and involuntary servitude? Do the government's laws provide for criminal punishment -- i.e. jail time -- for labor recruiters in labor source countries who engage in recruitment of laborers using knowingly fraudulent or deceptive offers that result in workers being exploited in the destination country? Are there laws in destination countries punishing employers or labor agents in labor destination countries who confiscate workers' passports or travel documents, switch contracts without the worker's consent as a means to keep the worker in a state of service, or withhold payment of salaries as means of

keeping the worker in a state of service? If law(s) prescribe criminal punishments for these offenses, what are the actual punishments imposed on persons convicted of these offenses?

The trafficking statutes of the criminal code do not differentiate between labor and sex trafficking. The penalties listed in paragraph 11 above apply to both.

¶14. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section D of reftel paragraph 28.

-- What are the prescribed penalties for rape or forcible sexual assault? How do they compare to the prescribed and imposed penalties for crimes of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation?

The prescribed penalties for rape are from three to 15 years of imprisonment depending on the aggravating circumstance, the same as for trafficking for sexual exploitation.

¶15. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section E of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Is prostitution legalized or decriminalized? Specifically, are the activities of the prostitute criminalized? Are the activities of the brothel owner/operator, clients, pimps, and enforcers criminalized? Are these laws enforced? If prostitution is legal and regulated, what is the legal minimum age for this activity? Note that in many countries with federalist systems, prostitution laws may be covered by state, local, and provincial authorities.

Prostitution is not legal, but is considered a civil, not criminal, offense, subject to a fine of USD 1.63 -3.27 for a first offense, and USD 3.27 - 6.55 for repeat offenses in the same calendar year. (NOTE: The fines are higher than last year only because the dram has strengthened against the dollar; the fine in local currency has not changed. 500-1,000 drams for the first offense, and 1,000-2,000 for the second offense. END NOTE.) Organization of and recruitment into prostitution are criminal offenses punishable under Articles 261 and 262.

¶16. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section F of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Has the government prosecuted any cases against traffickers? If so, provide numbers of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences served, including details on plea bargains and fines, if relevant and available. Please indicate which laws were used to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence traffickers. Also, if possible, please disaggregate by type of TIP (labor vs. commercial sexual exploitation) and victims (children, as defined by U.S. and international law as under 18 years of age, vs. adults).

(NOTE: Information from January - March 2008 is unavailable given the ongoing political crisis in the country. Should such data become available by the end of March it will be promptly transmitted. END NOTE.)

During calendar year 2007 the GOAM investigated 36 cases of sexual and labor exploitation; and convicted 32 people under trafficking statutes (Criminal Code articles 132 and 132-1) and pimping statutes (articles 261 and 262) on 22 cases. (NOTE: The 36 cases included more than 32 people; however, the PG's Office included person-by-person statistics only for the cases that actually made it to court. The number of defendants involved in postponed cases, and those still in progress, remains unspecified. END NOTE.)

Article 132: 5 cases. Two cases against three persons were sent to court. Two cases were suspended pending the location of the defendants and the remaining case is in progress. Four of the cases involved victims trafficked to the UAE, and one to Turkey.

Article 132-1: 9 cases. Four cases against five persons were sent to the courts. Three cases were postponed pending the location of

the defendants. The other cases, one of which was combined with a different one, are still in progress. Five of the cases involved victims trafficked to the UAE, and four involved Turkey.

Article 261: 4 cases. Three cases against 10 people were sent to court. One case was suspended pending the location of the defendants. Two of the cases ended in Turkey and one ended in the

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UAE.

Article 262: 18 cases. 13 cases against 15 people were sent to court. One case was suspended pending the location of the defendant, one case was transferred to the Russian Federation (since it involved Russian women) and the remaining are still in progress. Of these cases, 12 were trafficking cases committed in Armenia, two were cases in Turkey and four in the UAE.

According to the end of year data a total of 21 suspects involved in 16 criminal cases were wanted: nine persons on charges of Article 132; six - Article 132-1; two - Article 261; and four - Article 262.

During calendar year 2007 Armenian courts heard 24 cases under the trafficking and pimping statutes. Twenty-eight of the 32 defendants were women, and four were men. Of the 32 defendants, 28 were sentenced to prison terms between one and eight years; the sentences of nine persons out of 28 were suspended. Four people were fined 300,000 to 400,000 AMD (about 1,000 - 1,300 USD).

On August 3, 2007 a Yerevan court handed down the country's most stringent trafficking sentence to date: eight years' imprisonment for Gayane Melkonyan for two separate instances of trafficking of victims to the UAE and Turkey. However, on October 11, 2007 the review court decreased the sentence to six years.

-- Does the government in a labor source country criminally prosecute labor recruiters who recruit laborers using knowingly fraudulent or deceptive offers or impose on recruited laborers inappropriately high or illegal fees or commissions that create a debt bondage condition for the laborer? Does the government in a labor destination country criminally prosecute employers or labor agents who confiscate workers' passports/travel documents, switch contracts or terms of employment without the worker's consent, use physical or sexual abuse or the threat of such abuse to keep workers in a state of service, or withhold payment of salaries as a means to keep workers in a state of service?

Armenia is considered a labor source country, but very few prosecutable cases actually come to light. In these cases the same trafficking statutes as for sexual trafficking apply. Armenia is not a destination country for labor trafficking.

-- Are the traffickers serving the time sentenced: If not, why not? Please indicate whether the government can provide this information, and if not, why not?

No statistics are available on the length of time served by traffickers.

As noted above, traffickers are eligible for release from prison after serving one-half of their prison terms. The courts must approve the early release of convicted prisoners, but this approval is routinely granted.

In 2006, Anush Zakharyants, one of the first traffickers sentenced in Armenia, escaped from prison and then illegally departed the country. The PG's Office acknowledged that Zakharyants was released from custody temporarily, for legally-allowed medical attention, when she took the opportunity to flee the country via the land border with Georgia. A local journalist has made allegations that her escape resulted from official complicity. According to the GOAM, the government has taken all measures legally provided it by law to apprehend the fugitive, who has been placed on Armenia's wanted list and now also is on Interpol's look-out list. The MFA has promised to provide post with an official explanation of the

circumstances surrounding Zakharyants's escape, details of the post-escape investigation, and information on disciplinary measures taken by law enforcement agencies to punish personnel involved in the affair.

¶17. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section G of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Does the government provide any specialized training for government officials in how to recognize, investigate, and prosecute instances of trafficking? Specify whether NGOs, international organizations, and/or the USG provide specialized training for host government officials.

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Trafficking is included in the PG's Office's general training curriculum, and a training manual was published on international best practices and standards. All employees are required to take the initial course and periodic refresher courses. For its staff involved in combating trafficking, the PG's office also organized special training on the legal peculiarities of trafficking as a crime, and the peculiarities of TIP victims' behaviors.

The Police Academy curriculum does not include a segment on trafficking in persons. The Police Training School does not have TIP as a separate subject; however TIP is included within a wide range of subjects, linked to relevant articles of the criminal code on human rights violations.

Trafficking is also part of the curriculum of the National Security Service's Higher School of National Security.

The Ministry of Justice continues to hold training courses on prevention of trafficking, prosecution, and victims and witness protection in its Legal Institute which trains civil servants responsible for enforcement of judicial and criminal acts.

The Judicial school under the Judicial Department also has trafficking in its curriculum.

Also see answers to paragraph 28 below.

¶18. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section H of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Does the government cooperate with other governments in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases? If possible, can post provide the number of cooperative international investigations on trafficking?

The absence of diplomatic relations with Turkey, which is one of the main destination countries for Armenian trafficking victims, makes it very challenging for Armenian law enforcement agencies to cooperate with Turkish counterparts. The MFA and the Armenian police actively cooperate with Interpol in trying to fill that gap. According to GOAM data, they have located one Armenian trafficker in Turkey who they are trying to return to Armenia for prosecution.

In October 2007, the GOAM hosted the coordination council meeting of the Prosecutor Generals of CIS countries, and coordination on anti-trafficking was one of the agenda items discussed. Armenia's Prosecutor General made a presentation on TIP and it was decided at the council to develop a Plan of Cooperation in the field of Trafficking between CIS Prosecutor Generals.

According to the PG's Office, it cooperates with a number of countries, including the UAE and countries of the former Soviet Union. The lack of diplomatic relations with Turkey is the main obstacle to prosecuting TIP cases in Turkey, which is one of the two main countries of destination for trafficking in Armenian women.

The GOAM promotes links with foreign governments on TIP issues. In October 2007, the representatives of the Migration Agency took part in an international seminar held in Istanbul that was co-organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the

Budapest Process and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

¶19. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section I of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Does the government extradite persons who are charged with trafficking in other countries? If so, can post provide the number of traffickers extradited? Does the government extradite its own nationals charged with such offenses? If not, is the government prohibited by law from extraditing its own nationals? If so, what is the government doing to modify its laws to permit the extradition of its own nationals?

Armenia has signed two international agreements with the UAE, one a Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the other a treaty on Extradition (both were signed April 20, 2002 and ratified March 23, 2003). According to international experts, these agreements do not seem to be operational. Armenia also has extradition agreements also with the CIS countries.

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According to the Criminal Procedure Code, foreign citizens or individuals who have permanent resident status in a foreign country (but not citizenship) and who have committed a crime in Armenia, either may be extradited to their country of residency for prosecution, or may be prosecuted in Armenia if there is a relevant agreement between the two countries. The Code also stipulates that Armenian citizens may not be extradited to foreign countries for prosecution.

¶20. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section J of reftel paragraph 28.

-- Is there evidence of government involvement in or tolerance of trafficking, on a local or institutional level? If so, please explain in detail.

As in every aspect of Armenian jurisprudence and law enforcement, rampant petty corruption creates a significant problem, and one that the government has not to date shown sufficient political will to address seriously.

¶21. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section K of reftel paragraph 28.

-- If government officials are involved in trafficking, what steps has the government taken to end such participation? Have any government officials been prosecuted for involvement in trafficking or trafficking-related corruption? Have any been convicted? What sentence(s) was imposed? Please specify if officials received suspended sentences, were given a fine, fired, or reassigned to another position within the government as punishment. Please provide specific numbers, if available. Please indicate the number of convicted officials that received suspended sentences or received only a fine as punishment.

There were no cases of trafficking-related corruption or complicity reported during the reporting period. In reference to the case of the escape of Anush Zakharyants from prison, the MFA has promised to provide post with an official explanation of the circumstances surrounding Zakharyants's escape, details of the investigation into the escape, and information on disciplinary measures taken by law enforcement agencies to punish personnel involved in the affair.

¶22. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section L of reftel paragraph 28.

-- As part of the new requirements of the 2005 TVPRA, for countries that contribute troops to international peacekeeping efforts, please indicate whether the government vigorously investigated, prosecuted, convicted and sentenced nationals of the country deployed abroad as part of a peacekeeping or other similar mission who engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking or who exploit victims of

such trafficking.

Not applicable.

¶23. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section M of reftel paragraph 28.

If the country has an identified child sex tourism problem (as source or destination), how many foreign pedophiles has the government prosecuted or deported/extradited to their country of origin? What are the countries of origin for sex tourists? Do the country's child sexual abuse laws have extraterritorial coverage (similar to the U.S. PROTECT Act)? If so, how many of the country's nationals have been prosecuted and/or convicted under the extraterritorial provision(s) for traveling to other countries to engage in child sex tourism?

There is no identified child sex tourism problem in Armenia.

PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

¶24. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section A of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the government assist foreign trafficking victims, for example, by providing temporary to permanent residency status, or

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other relief from deportation? If so, please explain.

During the reporting period there were no clear-cut cases of Armenia serving as a destination country. There was one case of three Russian women who had traveled to Armenia to engage in prostitution.

The GOAM did not consider them trafficking victims, even though local NGOs working with TIP victims identified them as such and provided them with shelter. Two of the women were repatriated with assistance from the IOM, and the third decided to stay in Armenia.

¶25. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section B of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the country have victim care facilities which are accessible to trafficking victims?

There are two shelters in the country maintained by local NGOs that are designed to assist trafficking victims.

-- Do foreign victims have the same access to care as domestic trafficking victims?

Yes.

-- Does the country have specialized facilities dedicated to helping victims of trafficking? If so, can post provide the number of victims placed in these care facilities during the reporting period? What is the funding source of these facilities? Please estimate the amount the government spent (in U.S. dollar equivalent) on these specialized facilities dedicated to helping trafficking victims during the reporting period.

As mentioned above, there are two TIP shelters in Armenia, and they are exclusively operated and maintained by NGOs.

One is run by UMCOR with the funding of the Norwegian and Belgian Governments. UMCOR runs a permanent shelter and provides victims with medical, legal and psychological assistance. UMCOR also connects victims with training programs to help the victim reintegrate into society. During the reporting period, UMCOR provided assistance to eight victims. UMCOR also provided cash benefits, a monthly allowance to five victims in the amount of 20,000 AMD (approximately USD 65), and facilitated a donation from the American actress (Andrea Martin, the star of "Big Fat Greek Wedding") to purchase a home for one of the victims. UMCOR's implementer, the local NGO "Democracy Today" which resumed its

activities in August, 2007, maintained a hotline that from August 2007 through mid-March of 2008 had received 350 calls, about 15 percent of which were related to trafficking.

UMCOR reported that during the reporting period one of their victims, a graduate of an Armenian orphanage, received state-provided housing under a program run by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA).

Hope and Help maintains the second shelter with USG funding. Its does not permanently operate and opens only when a victim needs a safe haven. Hope and Help also provides legal, medical, social and psychological assistance to victims. During the reporting period, Hope and Help assisted 14 victims, and their hotline received 747 calls, of which 11 were real trafficking alerts.

After intervention by Hope and Help NGO, MLSA paid a one-time poverty allowance to two trafficking victims.

-- Does the government provide trafficking victims with access to legal, medical and psychological services? If so, please specify the kind of assistance provided, and the number of victims assisted, if available.

TIP victims, like all other citizens, enjoy access to complimentary medical check-ups.

According to the MLSA, regional social centers and state employment agencies, as well as local government agencies, cooperate with NGOs to provide possible assistance to trafficking victims and to distribute information to the public.

Changes have been made in the regulations of MLSA's Division on Women Issues, which has translated into the formal addition of trafficking to its wide-ranging mandate.

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During the reporting period, the MLSA helped UMCOR's TIP victims find jobs, offered assistance in getting their documents in order, and in one case helped settle a victim into an elderly home. As previously mentioned, the MLSA provided an apartment to one TIP victim under one of its programs which assists graduates of orphanages.

Armenia adopted a Law on Social Assistance in October 2005. Under the law, which came into force January 2006, vulnerable persons are eligible to receive the following social services: counseling, reintegration assistance, financial assistance, temporary shelter for up to 60 days, legal assistance, etc. Trafficking victims are not mentioned specifically, but are covered under this law. The lack of funding for social issues overall in Armenia hampers the practical implementation of the law.

In May the Foreign Ministry worked very actively with a local NGO to secure the release of two Armenian victims of trafficking who were sentenced in Georgia for illegally crossing the Turkish-Georgian border.

126. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section C of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the government provide funding or other forms of support to foreign or domestic NGOs and/or international organizations for services to trafficking victims? Please explain and provide any funding amounts in U.S. dollar equivalent. If assistance provided is in-kind, please specify exact assistance. Please explain if funding for assistance comes from a federal budget or from regional or local governments.

The GOAM does not provide such assistance; however, NGOs note exceptionally good cooperation with their individual counterparts in the relevant agencies (TIP-designated civil servants in all law enforcement agencies, but especially those working in the police, the Ministry of Health and MLSA).

127. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section D of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Do the government's law enforcement, immigration, and social services personnel have a formal system of proactively identifying victims of trafficking among high-risk persons with whom they come in contact (e.g., foreign persons arrested for prostitution or immigration violations)?

During the reporting period the government registered a significant breakthrough in completing the drafting of a National Referral Mechanism. In September 2007, the anti-TIP interagency working group established a working group to develop the detailed mechanics of the NRM. It was buoyed in its efforts by working jointly on the project with IOM, OSCE and the ICMPD. The working group was comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, MFA departments on international organizations and consular affairs, the Migration Agency under the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the police, Border Guards, and the NGOs Hope and Help and Democracy Today. A MLSA representative headed the work of the group, which, beginning its work in October, subsequently held 12 meetings and one 2-day-long event to flesh out the proposed NRM in detail. With GOAM prompting, the working group completed the draft NRM at the end of February 2008, which is now undergoing the appropriate interagency clearance process within the Armenian government. Once approved, the NRM will be pilot-tested for six months, modified as conditions require, and then placed into permanent operation by the end of calendar year 2008.

In the meantime, and in the run-up to the formal implementation of the NRM, government agencies are making referrals to corresponding NGOs on an informal basis.

In June 2007, the GOAM and the IOM, aided by USG INL funding, published a manual for Armenian consular officers abroad. The manual contains guidelines for interviewing and repatriating TIP victims. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health, UMCOR has developed two manuals for health and social workers that outline assistance and referral procedures for TIP victims.

-- What is the number of victims identified during the reporting

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period?

See section below.

-- Has the government developed and implemented a referral process to transfer victims detained, arrested or placed in protective custody by law enforcement authorities to institutions that provide short- or long-term care?

There have been no cases in Armenia when victims were detained, arrested or placed in protective custody by law enforcement agencies.

-- How many victims were referred for assistance by law enforcement authorities during the reporting period?

In the period from April 2007 through mid-March 2008, Hope and Help and UMCOR assisted 22 trafficking victims, of which 15 were referred to them by Armenian law enforcement agencies. According to one of the NGOs, two additional victims were referred to them by law enforcement agencies, however the victims refused the assistance of the NGO. Overall 17 referrals were made.

On September 3, authorities reported the conclusion of an investigation under the pimping statute that involved three Russian victims. The defendant, Armenian citizen Iren Mkrtchyan, and a Russian accomplice had recruited Russian women and were bringing them to Armenia for prostitution. Law enforcement agencies intercepted two of the victims at the Yerevan airport and referred all three to the local shelters operated by NGOs, who subsequently identified them as trafficking victims. Iren Mkrtchyan was prosecuted under pimping charges. The case against the Russian

accomplice E. Kanaeva was sent to Russia.

¶28. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section E of reftel paragraph 29.

-- For countries with legalized prostitution: does the government have a mechanism for screening for trafficking victims among persons involved in the legal/regulated commercial sex trade?

Not applicable.

¶29. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section F of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Are the rights of victims respected? Are trafficking victims detained or jailed? If detained or jailed, for how long? Are victims fined? Are victims prosecuted for violations of other laws, such as those governing immigration or prostitution?

In general, the rights of the victims are respected and victims are not treated as criminals; they are not detained, jailed or deported. NGOs report that those individuals in law enforcement agencies who have undergone anti-TIP training exhibit a significantly improved attitude towards TIP victims. According to some NGOs, the attitude of police officers in Armenia's regions still needs improvement.

¶30. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section G of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the government encourage victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking? How many victims assisted in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers during the reporting period?

Yes, and all 36 victims identified in paragraph 6 as victims have assisted in investigations.

-- May victims file civil suits or seek legal action against traffickers? Does anyone impede victim access to such legal redress?

Victims may file civil suits and seek legal action against traffickers. In practice, the rights of victims to file lawsuits have been honored.

-- If a victim is a material witness in a court case against a former employer, is the victim permitted to obtain other employment or to leave the country pending trial proceedings?

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No such cases have taken place.

-- Are there means by which a victim may obtain restitution?

While there is no state victim restitution program, the victims may obtain restitution through the court decisions, based on their claims during the criminal proceedings against traffickers, or a separate civil suit filed against the trafficker. In the one labor trafficking case recorded during the previous reporting period, the court ruled that the trafficker had to pay monetary compensation to his victims.

However, in sexual trafficking cases, the courts have rejected such claims by the victims. So, even though the TIP victims have been recognized as such under the prosecuted criminal cases, that does not necessarily entitle them to any restitution.

On November 27, 2007 the court ruled to reject the civil case of Hermine Zakaryan (a TIP victim) against her trafficker Irina Yenokyan. According to court materials, Irina Yenokyan, together with her accomplices in Yerevan, had lured Hermine to Dubai by promising her a well-paid waitressing job, where she subsequently forced her to prostitute. To deter Irina's escape, Irina Yenokyan and her husband Yenok Yenokyan beat and tortured Hermine, which resulted in a broken nose, stab wounds, and cigarette butt burns,

among other injuries. The victim through her civil suit demanded the trafficker provide her with monetary compensation of 340,000 AMD, approximately USD 1,110. The victim also acquired TB as a result of being trafficked and forced into prostitution. The court found Irina Yenokyan guilty of trafficking and pimping, and sentenced her to four years and three months in prison. For reasons unknown, her husband Yenok Yenokyan was not charged as a defendant in this case. The medical expertise had found that the injuries sustained by the victim could have been caused in the period when she was exploited in Dubai. Nonetheless the court found the civil suit unsubstantiated and rejected the demand for financial retribution.

¶31. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section H of reftel paragraph 29.

-- What kind of protection is the government able to provide for victims and witnesses? Does it provide these protections in practice?

The Criminal Procedural Code was amended in July 2006. The amendments refer to the Protection of Persons Participating in Criminal Proceeding.

According to OSCE's April 2007 "An Assessment of Current Responses on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Armenia," the area in which Armenian law has adapted least to the reality of trafficking is in victim assistance and protection. To quote the report, "The current version of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) restricts protection only to victims, witnesses involved in the criminal proceedings, and their close relatives, but does not extend protection to other persons participating in the criminal proceedings. Currently the Criminal Procedure Code requires that authorities respond initially to threats against victims or witnesses with an official warning, a measure that does little to put an end to such threats while eroding the security of the victims or witnesses themselves.

For trafficking victims who do decide to take legal action or testify against offenders, assistance in various forms is critical to ensuring an effective, long-term recovery from the trafficking process. According to Armenian legislation, in particular the Law on Social Assistance, certain assistance should be provided to victims, and that should as a minimum include secure accommodation, medical treatment, and education for children, but de facto, because of lack of financial means, this is not implemented."

-- What type of shelter or services does the government provide? Are these services provided directly by the government or are they provided by NGOs or IOs funded by host government grants? Does the government provide shelter or housing benefits to victims or other resources to aid the victims in rebuilding their lives? Where are child victims placed (e.g., in shelters, foster care, or juvenile justice detention centers)? What is the number of victims assisted by government-funded assistance programs during the reporting period?

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There are no state-run shelters. Those victims who have "aged-out" of orphanages are eligible for housing assistance from the state (see below), as well as social assistance in the form of vocational training and job placement. Child victims, if they are orphans or cannot return to their families, are placed in special schools or orphanages. There are very few recorded cases of child victims, though anecdotally there have been cases of victims, who had been victimized when they were minors, but were already older when identified.

-- What is the number of victims assisted by non government-funded assistance programs? What is the number of victims that received shelter services during the reporting period?

See paragraphs 25-26.

¶32. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section I of

reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the government provide any specialized training for government officials in identifying trafficking victims and in the provision of assistance to trafficked victims, including the special needs of trafficked children? Does the government provide training on protections and assistance to its embassies and consulates in foreign countries that are destination or transit countries? Does it urge those embassies and consulates to develop ongoing relationships with NGOs and IOs that serve trafficked victims?

During the reporting period the NGO Hope and Help provided five training programs on trafficking to law enforcement agencies with funding from the Christian Relief Society (CRS) -- four of which were administered in Armenia's regions and one in Yerevan. Personnel trained were 69 police officers, ten border guards and nine persons from the PG's office. Hope and Help also held two more training programs in Yerevan with funding from the European Commission for 30 representatives from the police, PG's office, Judges, Border Guards, lawyers and MFA representatives.

With USG funding, UMCOR in the fall of 2007 conducted seven training programs for law enforcement agencies in Yerevan and the regions. As a result, 99 police officers, including senior officers of criminal investigation units, district inspectors, juvenile inspectors, were trained on TIP and its effects; international anti-TIP instruments; TIP processes (recruitment, transportation and exploitation methods); trafficking in children; trafficking in human organs; the difference between trafficking and smuggling; prevention; identification; investigation; prosecution; protection; referral; etc. UMCOR also held eight training of trainers on TIP for 16 police officers from six regions, Yerevan and the anti-TIP located within the Armenian police.

During the summer-fall of 2007, IOM with USG funding for the project "Capacity Building of Border Guards and Allied Services Personnel" organized training for a total of 46 border guards and NSS officers serving at Zvartnots international airport and other border checkpoints. During the fall of 2007, IOM also held TIP training of trainers for 11 senior officers from different border checkpoints.

From September 5-6, 2007 the GOAM and the Council of Europe co-organized a regional conference to increase awareness on the European Convention to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, with wide participation from representatives of eight countries. The conference generated significant media interest and coverage.

See above for information on the publication of a manual for Armenian consular officers.

-- What is the number of trafficking victims assisted by the host country's embassies or consulates abroad during the reporting period? Please explain the level of assistance. For example, did the host government provide travel documents for the victim to repatriate, did the host government contact NGOs in either the source or destination countries to ensure the victim received adequate assistance, did the host government pay for the transportation home for a victim's repatriation, etc.

The GOAM assists victims with repatriation to Armenia from the UAE and from Turkey. The GOAM works through the Russian consulates in Turkey, which refer victims to the existing two shelters run by UMCOR and Hope and Help.

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In May 2007, the Foreign Ministry worked actively with a local NGO to secure the release of two Armenian victims of trafficking who were sentenced in Georgia for illegally crossing the Turkish-Georgian border.

133. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section J of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Does the government provide assistance, such as medical aid, shelter, or financial help, to its nationals who are repatriated as

victims of trafficking?

A January 2006 governmental decree granted the entire Armenia population, including trafficking victims, free primary health care (excluding specialized dental care).

Victims of trafficking who are recognized as victims of criminal cases are referred to UMCOR and Hope and Help, which offer medical, legal, financial assistance to the victims and whenever necessary offer them vocational training.

The GOAM works with other governments on regulating illegal migration, repatriating its citizens, and preventing trafficking. They have signed readmission agreements with Lithuania, Denmark, Sweden and Germany. Negotiations have been completed with the Benelux countries, Switzerland, Norway, the Czech Republic, Poland. Negotiations are underway with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania. These agreements regulate the procedures for the return of citizens. Armenia has a reintegration program with Switzerland that assists people to resettle in Armenia, through small business loans, language courses, vocational training. During the year within this program 21 families consisting of 51 persons have been reintegrated.

According to the OSCE report, good co-operation with Ukrainian authorities exists in the area of TIP prevention. According to a recent agreement between Armenia and Ukraine, all women from Ukraine are registered at their consular office in Armenia. They must have working contracts, pay taxes and thus their security is considered relatively secure. With Russia this procedure does not work yet.

¶34. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section K of reftel paragraph 29.

-- Which international organizations or NGOs, if any, work with trafficking victims? What type of services do they provide? What sort of cooperation do they receive from local authorities? How much funding (in U.S. Dollar equivalent) did NGOs and international organizations receive from the host government for victim assistance during the reporting period? Please disaggregate funding for prevention and public awareness efforts from victim assistance funding. NOTE: If post reports that a government is incapable of providing direct assistance to TIP victims, please assess whether the government ensures that TIP victims receive access to adequate care from other entities. Funding, personnel, and training constraints should be noted, if applicable. Conversely, the lack of political will in a situation where a country has adequate financial and other resources to address the problem should be noted as well.

There are a number of actors in this field. The two main NGOs that have shelters, hotlines and specific re-integration programs are Hope and Help and UMCOR. The Democracy Today NGO is a sub-implementer of UMCOR's. See above for more details.

PREVENTION

¶35. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section A of reftel paragraph 30.

-- Does the government acknowledge that trafficking is a problem in the country? If not, why not?

Yes, the GOAM acknowledges that trafficking is a problem, thanks in large part to post's advocacy efforts and the TIP reporting process, as well as the increasingly active participation of the international community in this field. As a result, over the past years the GOAM has shown increased awareness on the links between trafficking and labor migration.

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In March 2008, President Kocharian submitted for consideration to the parliament ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe on Combating Trafficking.

136. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section B of reftel paragraph 30.

-- Are there, or have there been, government-run anti-trafficking information or education campaigns conducted during the reporting period? If so, briefly describe the campaign(s), including their objectives and effectiveness. Please provide the number of people reached by such awareness efforts if available. Do these campaigns target potential trafficking victims and/or the demand for trafficking (e.g. "clients" of prostitutes or beneficiaries of forced labor)?

In late 2007, for the first time ever to post's knowledge, the GOAM allocated line-item funding for anti-TIP programs. Approximately 10 million drams (USD 33,000) from national budget reserve funds were allocated to the PG's office to conduct anti-TIP activities. The money was obligated after significant USG pressure, at the very end of the Armenian fiscal year. Eventually in December the PG's office decided to spread the funds over three discrete projects: a.) the filming of a documentary on labor trafficking that will be aired by regional TV companies as well as on national public television; b.) the production of two public service announcements to promote public awareness of trafficking and its prevention; and c.) an organizational map for law enforcement agencies that will document trafficking incidence in Armenia. (NOTE: The organizational map is something that the PG's office has not adequately explained to post's satisfaction. END NOTE.) The Association of Investigative Journalists has accepted the documentary project and is currently producing its material.

From September 5-6, 2007, the GOAM and the Council of Europe co-organized a regional conference to increase awareness on the European Convention to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. One hundred anti-TIP experts from Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, and other countries participated. The media extensively covered the conference, numerous TV and radio interviews were conducted, and Armenian parliamentarians, MFA officials and NGO representatives held televised debates. The GOAM spent 1,068,000 AMD on the event (approximately USD 3,560).

The Prosecutor General's office also regularly published on its website crime reports that included detailed facts and statistics on trafficking and pimping crimes.

During the year the Ministry of Health organized discussions with physicians from Armenian medical units to raise their awareness about treatment of trafficking victims.

The MLSA continues to furnish all graduates of orphanages with housing. The project is fully sustained with permanent allocations from the state budget. The graduates are also provided with social assistance in the form of vocational training, education, and job placement. During the year, 20 such graduates received apartments, one of whom was a victim of trafficking identified by UMCOR.

Beginning in December 2007, the GOAM organized seminars and roundtable discussions on trafficking in Armenia's regions for civil servants specifically responsible for ensuring the welfare of women and children (physicians, psychologists, social workers), and for journalists, NGOs and community heads as well.

The Migration Agency continues to maintain a hotline and a Migrants Service Point in its Yerevan office, where visitors may ask questions and obtain information on trafficking. Visitors to service point also receive a brochure entitled "Useful advice for those departing to the Russian Federation" which was published by the Migration Agency with support and funding from the Russian Migration Service.

During the reporting period, representatives of the Migration Agency together with the Russian Migration Service continued to tour the regions, organizing seminars to explain to the population the changes in the Russian migration laws, as well the trafficking risks associated with illegal migration.

In November, the Migrations Agency organized a seminar in Yerevan for NGOs on the topic of Russian and Armenian Migration legislation.

During August and November 2007, Armenian police organized preventive measures at all border checkpoints aimed to thwart trafficking in persons and drug trafficking.

The police in its "02" weekly newspaper and TV program regularly published and aired programs on TIP.

On November 7, the Migration Agency signed an agreement with UNDP to implement the program "Travel Safe: Pre-Migration Registration and Appropriate Surveys." The program envisages the establishment of registration centers in Yerevan, Gyumri and Artashat where labor migrants will receive proper information assistance that will help ensure legal, secure employment abroad.

In July 2007, the ILO, OSCE, and ICMPD launched the joint regional Anti-Trafficking Project, the main components of which are supporting the GOAM's implementation of the NAP; preventing trafficking through awareness efforts and engaging labor market institutions in preventive action; increasing the law enforcement agencies' capacity in detecting trafficking-related activities; and improving identification, protection and assistance to trafficking victims.

The GOAM provides input to the second cycle of the UNDP's anti-trafficking project. The project aims to develop a national framework to tackle the problem of human trafficking at policy and institutional levels, and provide direct assistance to trafficking victims. The project includes capacity development of personnel tasked with trafficking prevention; capacity development of law enforcement agencies and judicial personnel who investigate, prosecute and make legal judgments on trafficking cases; and strengthening of local capacities to protect the rights of trafficking victims (ie, societal reintegration via victims assistance programs).

According to UNDP, GOAM counterparts have been exceptionally helpful throughout the project, exhibiting dedication and commitment to the fruitful completion of the much-needed project.

Within this project, UNDP organized anti-TIP weeks in six regions of the country and in Yerevan. The public awareness campaigns differed from region to region, focusing on various constituencies and target groups, ie, local self-government officials, school students, media representatives, orphanage students, etc.

Both law enforcement agencies and NGOs agree that public awareness of sexual trafficking has risen significantly as a result of such projects, and the increased awareness has prevented a greater rise in trafficking victims.

137. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section C of refrel paragraph 30.

-- What is the relationship between government officials, NGOs, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society on the trafficking issue?

Both government bodies, especially law enforcement agencies, and international and local organizations involved in anti-trafficking efforts consistently cite good levels of cooperation. UMCOR gives particularly high scores to the MLSA and the Ministry of Health. And in return, law enforcement officials have lauded the role that NGOs such as Hope and Help play in assisting trafficking victims.

The interagency working group welcomes the input of NGOs in this field.

138. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section D of refrel paragraph 30.

-- Does the government monitor immigration and emigration patterns

for evidence of trafficking? Do law enforcement agencies screen for potential trafficking victims along borders?

The Migration Agency monitors emigration and immigration patterns in general, but not specifically for trafficking.

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Border guards do screen for potential trafficking victims at border checkpoints. In most cases, however, trafficking victims' documents are in order, making it difficult for border guards to identify them. Border guards do make a point of warning people traveling for employment about the potential for trafficking in persons.

Border guards run a short-term victim shelter at the Bagratashen border crossing point with Georgia, which has the capacity to host victims for a day or two before referring them to appropriate care.

¶39. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section E of reftel paragraph 30.

-- Is there a mechanism for coordination and communication between various agencies, internal, international, and multilateral on trafficking-related matters, such as a multi-agency working group or a task force? Does the government have a trafficking in persons working group or single point of contact? Does the government have a public corruption task force?

See above for information on the ministerial level council and interagency working group.

¶40. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section F of reftel paragraph 30.

-- Does the government have a national plan of action to address trafficking in persons? If so, which agencies were involved in developing it? Were NGOs consulted in the process? What steps has the government taken to disseminate the action plan?

In December 2007, the GOAM approved its second Anti-Trafficking National Plan of Action (NPA) that covers the period from 2007-2009.

The first Anti-TIP National Action Plan, which covered 2004-2006, expired in January 2007. Although there was no NPA for most of 2007, the GOAM's interagency working group continued its anti-trafficking efforts throughout the year drawing on the expired NPA. Some members in the international anti-trafficking community voiced dissatisfaction over the drafting of the second NPA, asserting that the process was not inclusive and the GOAM did not properly analyze the first NPA for lessons learned. (NOTE: This process divided the resident international donor community to a certain extent on strategy. While various multilateral and European voices urged delay on enactment of the revised National Plan of Action -- in a seemingly endless pursuit of an elusive perfect plan -- the U.S. Embassy spent the year pushing the GOAM to get its perfectly respectable draft plan in force as quickly as possible, and refine the fine points later. This disunity of advice contributed to the GOAM's delayed enactment. END NOTE)

While the GOAM has yet to allocate funding for programs stipulated under the new NPA, most of the activities described therein will be financed by the state budget. This makes it different from the first NPA where the international community financed virtually all anti-trafficking initiatives.

¶41. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section G of reftel paragraph 30.

-- G: For all posts: As part of the new criteria added to the TVPA's minimum standards by the 2005 TVPRA, what measures has the government taken during the reporting period to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts? (see ref B, para. 9(3) for examples)

Armenia is not a destination country for trafficking.

¶42. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section H of reftel paragraph 30.

-- Required of Posts in EU countries and posts in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong: As part of the new criteria added to the TVPA's minimum standards by the 2005 TVPRA, what measures has the government taken during the reporting period to reduce the participation in international child sex tourism by nationals of the country?

Not applicable.

¶43. (SBU) This section corresponds to questions in section H of reftel paragraph 30.

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-- Required of posts in countries that have contributed over 100 troops to international peacekeeping efforts (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia, and Zimbabwe): What measures has the government adopted to ensure that its nationals who are deployed abroad as part of a peacekeeping or other similar mission do not engage in or facilitate severe forms of trafficking or exploit victims of such trafficking?

Not applicable.

¶44. (U) Per request in paragraph 26 of reftel, the following are estimates of numbers of hours spent on the preparation of the TIP report cable by various embassy officers.

Political Assistant: 70 hours.
Political Officer: 20 hours.
Pol/Econ Chief: 1 hours.
A/DCM: 1 hours.
Charge d'Affaires: 1 hours.

¶45. (U) Post's trafficking POC is deputy Polchief Daniel Hastings (hastingsdo@state.gov).

PENNINGTO